

BPFTI Insider

A publication of the Border Patrol Facilities & Tactical Infrastructure Program Management Office

BPFTI PMO PUTS RGV GATE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT TO THE TEST

Planning and constructing nearly 650 miles of fence across the Southwest Border could hardly be considered an easy task. From deserts to mountains and just about every other environment and type of terrain in between, the predecessor to the BPFTI PMO Tactical Infrastructure (TI) Division faced challenges in executing the project at nearly every mile.

But even within this context, few areas were as challenging as planning and constructing fence in the Border Patrol's Rio Grande Valley (RGV) Sector.

The fence needed to be constructed in compliance with a 1970 Treaty with Mexico, which legally prohibited any construction in the floodplain that may divert the normal water flow of the river or its flood flows. Because of this fence alignment, some landowner's property within the RGV Sector lies south of the actual fence.

For the short-term, (b) (7)(E) in the fence to accommodate these landowners, while designs were being worked to rectify (b) (7)(E). In an effort to complete this project and secure the fence, the BPFTI PMO along with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is providing a solution.

As part of Phase I of the RGV Gates Construction project, test gates were constructed in December of 2011 in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties. During this period, the PMO worked in close



The (b) (7)(E) (shown above) is one of the (b) (7)(E) Rio Grande Valley (RGV) test gates being constructed in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, Texas.

cooperation with USACE, RGV Sector, and other stakeholders to ensure that necessary parties were kept abreast of the project status and questions or concerns were addressed.

The approved design took into account ease of use for landowners, appropriate security measures, and how the gates would operate in the event of a power failure. For the Border Patrol, the gates will help provide persistent impedance for illegal cross-border activity.

Setting the Stage for Implementation

In preparation for Phase I, PMO and USACE personnel, along other subject matter experts, conducted a series of outreach meetings in RGV to brief the Sector on the construction impacts and concerns. In addition, stakeholder outreach was conducted for landowners, local emergency responders and other local partners.

The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the impacts of the RGV Gate Construction Project and address stakeholders' questions and concerns. Sector, BPFTI and USACE personnel presented the operational and technical aspects of the project, respectively, with support from real estate, technical, and legal experts from CBP's Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) and the Department of Justice (DOJ). Comments received from stakeholders during the question and

answer sessions focused on gate access and location, but additional questions remain. The PMO will continue to work closely with Border Patrol, USACE, OCC, and DOJ to ensure stakeholder questions and comments are addressed.

While some landowners expressed frustrations with the construction, the outcomes of these meetings were largely positive; the proactive approach has played a critical role in helping building relationships and trust with key stakeholders.

"Early on, we identified that one of the keys to this project was getting out in front of it," said BPFTI PMO TI Division Director (b) (6), (b) (7)(C), who along with RGV Sector Assistant Chief Agent (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) made presentations to the stakeholders groups. "I think meeting face to face with landowners and other key stakeholders really helped get this project off on the

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NEWS BITS

OA OFFSITE FOCUSES ON “STEWARDSHIP”

OA leadership from across the country recently gathered at the CBP Advanced Training Center in Harper’s Ferry, WV to discuss the issues, challenges, and opportunities that lay ahead for OA in the next year. The primary theme for the session focused on “Stewardship” and how it applies to CBP given the current Federal budget environment.

Some of the common themes resulting from the stewardship discussions included OA’s responsibility as stewards to spend the taxpayer dollars wisely including doing the right thing with our resources. This led to OA leadership agreeing upon a definition of stewardship moving forward, which will be defined as “Our obligation to champion the responsible planning, use, and accountability of resources entrusted to CBP to accomplish its mission.”

In implementing our own Strategic Plan, the BPFTI PMO has identified several goals and objectives that coincide with

OA’s goals of being good stewards of taxpayers’ dollars. The PMO exemplifies good stewardship by delivering cost-effective Facilities and TI that meet Border Patrol operational requirements and maintaining Facilities and TI in a cost effective, responsive manner.

Additionally, one of the sessions focused on “Followership” and OA’s responsibilities to DHS to help – in every possible way – in working toward common goals. Also identified on our Strategic Plan, PMO followership is exemplified every day in carrying out our mission to deliver life-cycle solutions to support Border Patrol’s Facilities, TI and Environmental requirements.

By serving the needs of our business partner, the Office of Border Patrol, and being good stewards of the resources provided to us, the PMO will continue to implement and execute the strategic goals and plans outlined by both OA and BPFTI leadership.

PMO Tests Gate Construction Project (cont’d.)

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right foot.”

Constructing the (b) (7)(E) Test Gates in RGV

Testing on these (b) (7)(E) locations will occur through mid-February. During gate construction, Border Patrol will continue to work with landowners to suggest alternate routes to ensure they have access around the construction site, including south of the levee, to the greatest extent possible.

Once the test gates are operational, additional outreach will be conducted with landowners and local stakeholders to

ensure the necessary parties are trained in how to operate the gates.

Construction for the remaining Phase I gates will occur after this testing period is complete. The total of Phase I will consist of (b) (7)(E) gate locations in Cameron County, Texas and (b) (7)(E) in Hidalgo County, Texas.

After the Phase I gates are constructed and installed, they will help deter illegal activity while still allowing authorized landowners, the Border Patrol, emergency responders, and other authorized personnel to access land south of the fence. Assuming Border Patrol deems this project successful in meeting their requirements, Phase II may be explored for future construction.

BPFTI Insider

The *BPFTI Insider* is a monthly newsletter published by Facilities Management and Engineering’s Border Patrol Facilities and Tactical Infrastructure (BPFTI) Program Management Office (PMO). The *BPFTI Insider* strives to provide the PMO’s personnel and partners with all the latest news encompassing the program.

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BPFTI Vision

Excel as a trusted strategic partner enhancing Border Patrol’s proud legacy.

BPFTI Mission

Deliver life cycle solutions to support Border Patrol’s Facilities, Tactical Infrastructure, and Environmental requirements.

Submissions

The Editorial Board welcomes newsletter idea submissions. The decision to publish is subject to the discretion of the Editorial Board.

All submissions for the *BPFTI Insider* should be sent to (b) (7)(E)

